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Endometriosis - How male partners experience sexuality

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***Human Reproduction* extended abstract clinical study manuscript**

Use MESH* terms in title and abstract.

Please complete all sections; please do not remove or change headings.

Title: Endometriosis – how male partners experience sexuality

Abstract

Study question: Is sexual satisfaction of male partners of endometriosis patients affected?

Summary answer: Endometriosis affects also the sex life of the healthy partner.

What is known already: Women with endometriosis suffer from dyspareunia and are less sexually satisfied than healthy women. They report feelings of guilt toward their partners for not being able to fulfill their sexual wishes.

Study design, size, duration: The study was a multi-centered case-control study. Male partners of endometriosis patients and healthy women were recruited between december 2010 and december 2015. A total of 236 partners each took part in the study.

Participants/materials, setting, methods: 236 partners of endometriosis patients were matched according to the age of their female partner with 236 partners of healthy women. They answered a questionnaire based on a modified version of the brief index on functioning and global sexual functioning. Partners of women with endometriosis with all stages participated in the study.

Main results and the role of chance: Male partners of endometriosis patients are less sexually satisfied and would wish more sexual activity compared to partners of healthy women. Partners of endometriosis partners report significantly smaller frequencies of sexual intercourse and sexual intercourse from behind. Sexual desire and the wish for sexual activity shows no difference between the two groups. The odds ratio of being (very) unsatisfied with a partner with endometriosis is 2.55.

Limitations, reasons for caution: Our study did not involve ethnic minorities. It could be that only in well working relationships a male partner would participate in such a study which would lead to too positive results.

Wider implications of the findings: Chronic diseases often also affect the healthy partner of a relationship. Studies involving the male partner of endometriosis patients so far had very small participant numbers and were qualitative. Our findings are in accordance with those studies and similar results were found for women affected by gynaecological cancer. In order to decrease difficulties in relationships of endometriosis patients male partners could be

invited to consultation hours from early in and changes regarding sexuality could be discussed.

Study funding/competing interest(s): There were no funding or competing interests.

Trial registration number:

* for MESH terms see PubMed at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

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